

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
Information Bulletin #48

**RESOLUTION OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION IN SUPPORT OF THE CONCEPTS
EMBODIED IN THE MARQUETTE GREENWAY PROJECT AND EXPANSION OF THE PROJECT TO
INCLUDE THE EASTERN PORTION OF THE COASTAL ZONE**

WHEREAS, Northwest Indiana includes a diversity of plant and animal species unmatched in the state, including the Karner blue butterfly, sea rocket, Pitcher's thistle, Kalm's St. John's wort, beach pea, dune goldenrod, and Peregrine falcon;

WHEREAS, Northwest Indiana displays ecosystems of special significance, portions of which are preserved within the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore and the Indiana Dunes State Park, and portions of which are outside these preserves;

WHEREAS, Northwest Indiana contains the Port of Indiana, the busiest port on Lake Michigan and a critical element of Indiana commerce;

WHEREAS, Northwest Indiana maintains a steel industry with state-of-the-art technology that produces 25% of the nation's steel;

WHEREAS, Northwest Indiana possesses a major oil refinery and other critical energy generating industries;

WHEREAS, Northwest Indiana is located adjacent to Chicago, a great metropolitan center, establishing both opportunities for tourism and challenges for providing adequate infrastructure and community services;

WHEREAS, Northwest Indiana includes Lake Michigan, an unparalleled water resource within the state, for boating, sport fishing, and commercial fishing;

WHEREAS, Northwest Indiana shares Lake Michigan, its major source of drinking water, with industrial and other usages within and outside Indiana;

WHEREAS, Northwest Indiana concentrates these diverse and sometimes competing uses within 45 miles of shoreline;

WHEREAS, Northwest Indiana is challenged by environmental degradation, much of it dating from the beginning of the 20th Century, including one of 43 areas of concern designated in the United States and Canada by the International Joint Commission;

WHEREAS, Northwest Indiana is experiencing population growth which both enhances opportunities and exacerbates challenges requiring increased planning;

WHEREAS, Northwest Indiana is governed by a multiplicity of statutory and regulatory standards, some of which are exclusive to the region, and these are administered by a multiplicity of federal, state, and local agencies;

WHEREAS, the Department of Natural Resources through the Lake Michigan Coastal Program funded the Marquette Greenway Project to address regional planning issues in Northwest Indiana;

WHEREAS, five communities in Northwest Indiana through Memorandum of Agreement agreed to support three guiding principles to be incorporated into the project;

WHEREAS, the Marquette plan embodies concepts key to the protection of natural, cultural, and historic resources while incorporating wise redevelopment of industrial sites and builds a foundation for these protections to be included in local planning; and

WHEREAS, the Northwest Indiana Quality of Life Council and the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission passed resolutions supporting the current efforts embodied in the Marquette Greenway project and encourage the expansion of the project to the full 45 miles of coastline;

***NOW BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
THAT***

The Natural Resources Commission supports the concepts and ideas regarding resource protection and improved planning for Northwest Indiana put forth by the Marquette Greenway Project.

The Department of Natural Resources is urged to encourage the expansion of this project to include additional areas in the Lake Michigan Coastal Area not already included.

The Department of Natural Resources is urged to work with citizens of Northwest Indiana to help identify and prioritize social and environmental needs addressed in this planning effort.

The Department of Natural Resources is urged to actively pursue improved communication and coordination within the agency and with other state, federal, and Northwest Indiana agencies and governmental units.

The Department of Natural Resources is urged to assure that the Marquette Project adheres to all laws pertaining to environmental management and protection of the Lake Michigan Coastal Area.

The Department of Natural Resources is urged to support the participating local, state, and regional entities as they adopt the planning principles contained in the project.